

Good afternoon, Members of the Appropriations Committee. I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to listen to the concerns of your constituents.

My name is Sarah Miller and I come before you today to express concern over the proposed reductions in the Governor's budget proposal for Connecticut Community Colleges.

I am a student at Naugatuck Valley Community College, one of the twelve Community Colleges across our grand state. I am double majoring in behavioral science and pre-nursing studies. My dream is to one day become a nurse, helping and assisting those who need it most.

I realize I have been truly blessed and have been afforded a privilege, not experienced by all, to attend a place of higher education. I am extremely grateful to those who have helped along my academic path and for the opportunities afforded me.

The Connecticut Community Colleges are a unique place of learning. These colleges consist of those just out of high school, those who need guidance and encouragement along their academic journey, those who are undergoing a career change, and those who simply don't have enough financial resources to attend a typical four-year university. The Community Colleges have afforded many students success both in life and in their professions; however, with these proposed budget reductions the success of these students may be in jeopardy. With the cost of living being increased daily, many will be unable to attend school, especially with the rising tuition costs. Those who are able to afford school will be forced to deal with possible reductions in course offerings and services. Either way, both the Connecticut Community Colleges and students stand to suffer from these proposed budget reductions.

As I look toward the future, I realize that it may be in my best interest to continue my education beyond the borders of Connecticut. It saddens me that I may have to leave the state I grew up in. I love Connecticut and I am hopeful that her best days are ahead of her, however, we must realize that anything that hinders investing in the future of this great state is clearly hurting it, not helping it. Let's keep investing in the best resources the state has to offer: people.

I ask that you consider the repercussions and consequences of reducing the Connecticut Community College budget. My hope is that many will continue to be blessed by the experience and privilege of a higher education.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions you have for me.